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(54) **SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR THE SECURE TRANSACTION MANAGEMENT AND ELECTRONIC RIGHTS PROTECTION**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **H04L 9/32**
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(58) **Field of Search** 705/51, 52, 56, 705/57; 380/201–203; 386/94, 124

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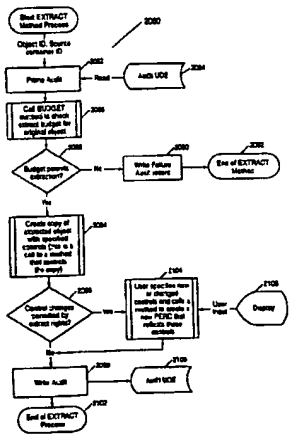
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention provides systems and methods for secure transaction management and electronic rights protection. Electronic appliances such as computers equipped in accordance with the present invention help to ensure that information is accessed and used only in authorized ways, and maintain the integrity, availability, and/or confidentiality of the information. Such electronic appliances provide a distributed virtual distribution environment (VDE) that may enforce a secure chain of handling and control, for example, to control and/or meter or otherwise monitor use of electronically stored or disseminated information. Such a virtual distribution environment may be used to protect rights of various participants in electronic commerce and other electronic or electronic-facilitated transactions. Distributed and other operating systems, environments and architectures, such as, for example, those using tamper-resistant hardware-based processors, may establish security at each node. These techniques may be used to support an all-electronic information distribution, for example, utilizing the "electronic highway."

72 Claims, 146 Drawing Sheets



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